



Airmen sweep an area looking for a simulated insurgent during an improvised explosive device training scenario at Fort Hood, Texas, Monday.

Team makes morale visit

Morale

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Tech. Sgt. Thomas Fry, a computer operations NCO from Tinker AFB, Okla., said the training received so far from the Army at Fort Hood has been very effective and "world class. It's really been outstanding."

Colonel McWhorter said the team has received combat life-saving certification and been trained on convoy operations and improvised explosive device identification and notification. They also received media, cultural awareness, language skills and weapons training.

"One instructor said we were the best class he had ever had," she said. "He said we were bright, we pay attention, we're respectful, we're proud of our service, we catch on quickly and we move forward. It's really neat to see everyone rise to the challenge."

"Our presence definitely made a difference. We lifted a lot of spirits. Each and every one of them is a hero. For many of them, this deployment was unexpected. For some, they had a day's notice. They've all stepped up to the plate. They are all ready to do the mission and to come home."

Chaplain (Capt.) Dan Giorgi
12th Flying Training Wing chaplain

The team from Randolph learned a lot during the visit about this team's training and pending mission. Chief Page said, and he pledged to return to send the team off



Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Page (right), 12th Flying Training Wing command chief master sergeant, checks on the welfare of Airmen in a 1950s-style barrack during his visit to Fort Hood Sunday. The Airmen are currently preparing for their mission and potential combat when they deploy to Iraq.

when its training is complete.

Foxtrot team member Maj. Eric Bowden, a contractor at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph and a Reserve officer in the 433rd Logistics Readiness Squadron at Lackland AFB, said the Airmen really appreciated that the team from Randolph, which is not associated with them, would take interest in their plight.

"I enjoyed it too because of my employment and association with Randolph," said the major.

Sergeant Fry added that "just interacting with Air Force personnel was a huge boost for morale. The chaplain visiting with people and everything this team did just really did help a lot."

Chief Page said several of the Airmen told him that by "just showing up and saying, 'We're here,' listening to them, shaking their hands, talking to them about their families, their children, their spouses, their parents ... they said it made their situation more positive. They embraced us and it was a huge morale boost for them," he said. "The way they're handling each other, talking to each other, it's very positive, very upbeat. Their attitudes are just great. This cell, and it's a reflection of leadership, is a model for the rest of the Air Force to emulate."

At the end of the visit Tuesday, Chaplain Giorgi spoke and prayed with every Airman on the Foxtrot team. He sent them off to the day's training with a prayer and assured them the entire Air Force is backing them.

"Our presence definitely made a difference. We lifted a lot of spirits," Chaplain Giorgi said. "Each and every one of them is a hero. For many of them, this deployment was unexpected. For some, they had a day's notice. They've all stepped up to the plate. They are all ready to do the mission and to come home."



Capt. Shawn Booker, a geographic support team lead officer assigned to Iraqi Assistance Group Foxtrot training at Fort Hood, Texas, secures an area near a convoy during training Monday. Captain Booker is assigned to Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. (Photos by Master Sgt. Lee Roberts)



Above: Three simulated insurgents stop a convoy during a training scenario Monday. The convoy's leadership had to make split-second decisions for numerous situations thrown at them by the Army instructors. Below: A smoke grenade is set off simulating an attack on a humvee in the convoy.



A convoy keeps a watchful eye for possible trouble along a training route designed to prepare them for potential insurgent tactics for when they deploy to Iraq.